

John Roche

The Female Parricide :

O R, T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

Mary-Margaret d'Aubray,

MARCHIONESS of *Brinvillier*,

Who was beheaded and burnt at *Paris*, for
poisoning her Father, her two Brothers,
and attempting to kill her Sister in
the same Manner.

Wherein are contained the learned Pleadings of
her Counsel at her Trial before the Parliament
of *Paris*; and a particular Account of her Be-
haviour from her Sentence to her Execution.

Translated from the *French*.

W I T H A

PREFACE by the TRANSLATOR,

In which a Parallel is drawn between the
Marchioness and Miss *Blanchy*.

R E A D I N G,

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M DCC LII.

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~~rotate or misrepresent the Circum-~~
~~stances of the Case.~~

THE

PREFACE.

TO

WE must acknowledge that the Parricide lately committed on the Body of Mr. *Francis Blandy*, Attorney at Law and Town-Clerk of *Henley upon Thames, Oxfordshire*, by his only Daughter, (as is strongly suspected) has occasioned the Translating and Publishing the History of the Marchioness of *Brinvillier*, executed some Years ago at *Paris* for the same Crime. The Circumstances are very near parallel on both Sides: But as Miss *Blandy* has not yet been try'd, 'tis necessary we write upon her Account with all the Precaution imaginable, for fear the Publick should think, that out of Prejudice we exaggerate

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gerate or misrepresent the Circumstances that attended her Father's Death, on purpose to increase her Guilt, or conceal her Innocence. God forbid we should ever entertain such a Thought! What we are going to say shall be grounded upon the Depositions of the Witnesses taken by the Coroner's Inquest, and the Testimonies of People who shall be named. What was true five Months ago is so at present, and will ever remain so: A little Anticipation of some Facts already known will make her Cause neither the better nor the worse. Nor do we pretend to put Arms into the Hands of her Judges to be made use of against her; for which we have neither Capacity nor Inclination. Our only Design is to draw a Kind of Parallel between Miss *Blandy* and the Marchioness of *Brinvillier*, and to shew the Likeness there is between them in several Respects.

To pronounce the Fate of a Criminal before his Trial, or to pass Sentence upon him without his being heard, would be both unjust and barbarous: Yet this is Miss *Blandy's* Case; People already condemn her, though she has not been heard by her Judges, nor convicted of the Offence with which she is charged. A little Time will determine whether we are to look upon her as an innocent Person misled by a vile Wretch, or as the most wicked of all Women.---But to begin our intended Comparison.

MISS *Blandy* in reality is the Occasion of her Father's Death, by administering to him Powders, which, according to the Physicians and other People present at the Opening of his Body, were actual Poison.

HER saying to *Elizabeth Binfield*, her Servant, *Who would grudge to send*

an old Father to Hell for Ten Thousand Pounds? seems to prove her Case like that of the Marchioness; for it may be supposed that Interest and Love were the chief Motives on which both of them acted. Madam *Brin villier* wanted to get the Fortune of her Relations, and Miss *Blandy* appears to have acted upon the same Principle. *Brin villier* received the Poison for murdering her Father, &c. from *St. Croix* her Gallant; Miss *Blandy* had from Capt. *Cr--n*, likewise her Gallant, the Poison* she administer'd to her Father. The Gallants of these two Ladies were both married; the Marchioness, who had a Husband, wanted to get rid of him to marry *St. Croix*, and there is no doubt that *Cr-----n* would have poisoned his Wife to marry Miss *Blandy*. It may be said the Marchioness was

* The Powders given to the deceas'd Mr. *Blandy* were white Arsenic, as it is expected will be prov'd by an Apothecary at her Trial.

guilty of a great many more Crimes than Miss *Blandy*, in Case this last be convicted. It may be answer'd, 'tis not the Nature of the Crimes that makes a Difference between them, but only the Number of them; whosoever is guilty of murdering a Father will not scruple at all to commit other Murders, if it suits either Revenge or Interest: One Crime generally draws another after it.

THE Indiscretion of these two Ladies has a near Resemblance: The one said, she had a great many Legacies in a Box; the other, that her Father would die in a little Time: Both gave a strong Indication of what they were about.

THE Marchioness reconciled herself with her Father, in order to succeed the better in her wicked Design; Miss *Blandy* presented Poison to her Father,

Father, under Pretence of making him love her the better.

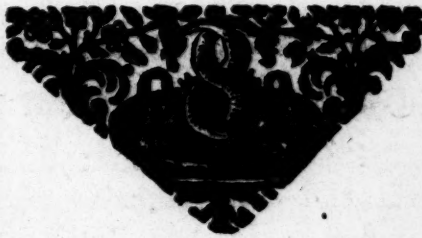
THE Marchioness being arrested offered to bribe her Guards; Miss *Blandy* offered 500*l.* to her Man-Servant to go away with her, and upon his Refusal 20*Guineas* to her Maid-Servant, only for hiring a Post-Chaise; but the Offers of both were equally rejected.

THE Marchioness being under Confinement behaved in a very unconcerned Manner, playing at Cards, &c. so, it is said, does Miss *Blandy* in the Castle at *Oxford*.

THE last Parallel we shall draw between these two unfortunate Ladies is in these few Particulars: They were pretty near of an equal Age, both well educated, of good natural Parts, and indulged by their Parents. We
heartily

(vii)

heartily wish they may not resemble one another, in respect of the Crimes whereof the one has been convicted, and the other is accused.



THE

(vii)

heartily wish they may not resemble
one another, in the crimes
whereof the one is convicted,
and the other is not.



THIS

[2]

T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F T H E

Marchionefs of *Brinvillier*.

JUSTICE, from Time to Time, brings before her Tribunal Persons guilty of such Crimes, as to make human Nature tremble at the relating of them: We shall give our Readers an Instance of this Kind in the Marchionefs of *Brinvillier*.

SHE was Daughter to Mr. *Dreux d'Aubray*, Lieutenant-Civil, and was married to the Marquis of *Brinvillier*, Son to Mr. *Gobelin*, President in the Chamber of Accounts at *Paris*. The Fortune of the new-marry'd Couple was answerable to their Birth; for the Marquis was Master of *30,000 Livres a Year, and her Fortune amounted to 200,000 Livres.

THE Marquis was then Colonel of the Regiment of Horse of *Normandy*: In his Campaigns he got acquainted with one Mr. *Godin*, otherwise *St. Croix*,

* About 1200 l. English Money.

who had been a Captain in the Regiment of *Tracy*: This Gentleman was the Bastard of an illustrious Family, whose Name he would not assume, for fear of discovering the Ignominy of his Birth. He was one of those Men, who are naturally inclined to the greatest Crimes, and being endowed with an artful Genius, have the Cunning to conceal their bad Inclinations, under the Appearance of Honesty. The Marquis introduced him into his House upon the Footing of a Friend, but he soon contracted an intimate Acquaintance with his Lady, and then became a passionate Lover, and soon inspired her with the same Sentiments with which she had inflamed his Breast. The Marquis was a very wild and extravagant Man, and did not observe his Wife's Behaviour. *St. Croix* made himself serviceable to the Lady, who found herself obliged to part from her Husband, because his Affairs were in a bad Way through his ill Management. She obtained this Separation, in order to free herself entirely from the Dependency her Husband kept her under, and to give a full Swing to the Passion she had conceived for *St. Croix*.

BUT before we go further 'tis proper to satisfy the Curiosity of the Reader, by describing the Person of the Marchioness of *Brinvillier*. Nature had blessed her with most of the Charms which make her Sex lovely; her Features were regular and pleasing; she had a round Face, and a graceful Countenance. Under so beautiful an Outside she concealed the blackest Soul; which proves that Metoposcopy, or Physiognomy, is a false Science; for
this



this Lady had a quiet and serene Look, which seems to indicate the Calmness of a virtuous Mind; but she is not the only wicked Woman, who has had Virtue printed on her Face, as virtuous Women have sometimes Features that would induce one to think them vicious. *

THE Marchioness's criminal Commerce with *St. Croix* obliged Mr. *D'Aubray*, her Father, who was displeased to see the Insensibility of her Husband, to obtain a *Lettre de Cachet*, † in order to arrest *St. Croix*, which was executed when he was with the Marchioness in her Coach, and he was carried to the *Bastille*. ‡ 'Tis not an easy Matter to describe the Despair these two Lovers were thrown into by this cruel Separation. *St. Croix*, during his Confinement, got acquainted with an *Italian* Compounder of Poisons, call'd *Exili*, who taught him that fatal Art, which he afterwards employ'd in so wicked a Manner. *St. Croix* was kept Prisoner for about a Year, and *Exili* was set at Liberty near the same Time, and found an Asylum in *St. Croix's* House, 'till he had made him a perfect Master of his diabolical Science.

Madam de *Brinvillier* renewed her Acquaintance with *St. Croix* as soon as he came out of the *Bastille*; but concealed her criminal Correspondence with him

* Mr. *La Chambre* says, in his *Art of knowing Man*, that Metoposcopy is the Art of making wrong Judgments of People, because the Forehead, the Face, and the Eyes are often deceitful.

† An Order or Warrant of the King, to apprehend or arrest any Person.

‡ A State Prison in *Paris*, as the Tower in *London*.

so artfully as to reconcile herself with her Father. *St. Croix* acquainted her with the dangerous Secrets he had learn'd from *Exili*; and, as will be seen, she made an horrid Use of them. Being prompted by her revengeful and avaricious Disposition, she resolved to stifle in her Breast all Sentiments of Nature and Humanity; and to poison her Father and all her Family, in order to get their Estate into her Hands; and *St. Croix* expected that being already Master of the Marchioness's Heart, he could not fail of sharing with her whatever she should inherit by the Death of her Relations.

SHE made several Experiments of the Poisons prepared by *St. Croix*: She poisoned Biscuits, which she distributed amongst poor People, and carefully enquir'd what Effects they produced. She was so cruel as to go to the *Hotel-Dieu*,* and give these poisoned Biscuits to the poor Patients there. She also made a Trial of her Poisons upon her Chamber-maid, call'd *Frances Roussel*, to whom she gave poison'd Currants, and a Slice of Ham, which made her very sick, but did not kill her.

MADAM *Sevigné* writes thus, in her 292^d Letter: "Madam *Brinvillier*, says she, poisoned Pigeon-pies, by which several People died, whom she did not intend to kill. The Chevalier *Duguet* is now dying of the Present she gave him about three Years ago. In her Confinement she enquired whether this Gentleman was dead, and being answer'd in the Negative: *He dies hard*,

* An Hospital.

“ said she.” Mr. *La Rochefaucault* assures us this is Fact.

THE Lieutenant-Civil being at *Ossemont*, his Country-Seat, with his cruel Daughter, she poisoned him with a Mess of Soup, which she gave him with her own Hands: The Effects of it were so violent as to cause frequent Retchings, exquisite Pains in his Stomach, and strange Burnings in his Bowels. This wicked Creature, after having perpetrated this Parricide, not only saw, with all the Calmness in the World, the Pains her poor Father suffered, but still behaved in such a becoming Manner as to prevent all Suspicion of her Guilt.

THIS Gentleman being obliged to return to *Paris*, died soon after of the Poison he had taken. The Cause of his Death remaining a Secret, the Marchioness upon this was embolden'd to make the next Attempt upon the Life of her eldest Brother, who succeeded in the Employment and Estates of his Father; and then to serve her youngest Brother, who was a Counsellor in the Parliament, in the same Manner.

IT was about this Time that the Marchioness having drank too freely at an Entertainment, met in her Room, where she was going to rest, a Woman of her Acquaintance, who sometimes came to visit her, to whom she had the Imprudence to shew a little Box she took out of her Bureau, and to tell her, *A great many Legacies are contained in this Box: Here is what will enable me to be revenged on my Enemies.* This Woman observed sublimate Mercury, both in Powder and in Paste, which she knew
very

very well, being the Daughter of an Apothecary. Wine has often brought to Light great Crimes. A few Hours after this, Madam *Brinvillier* having recovered her Reason, denied all she had said to this Woman, and told her, that if she had spoke so indiscreetly, it was not her Intention, nor did she remember it. She kept this Box with a great deal of Care, and said to the same Woman, that if she (the Marchioness) was to die suddenly, she enjoined her to throw the Box into the Fire. She often said, when she was under any Uneasiness of Mind, that she would poison herself: If she was provoked by any Body, she could not forbear saying, that she knew how to get rid of those who offended her; that she could give them a mortal Wound in their Soup.* Thus her Tongue discover'd the Wickedness of her Heart.

MADAM *Seigné*, in her 270th Letter, says, " That the Marchioness of *Brinvillier* had a Mind " to marry *St. Croix*, and for that Purpose often " gave Poison to her Husband, in order to get rid " of him; but *St. Croix*, who was not willing to " have a Wife as wicked as himself, gave Counter- " poisons, or Antidotes, to the poor Husband, " every Time his Lady poisoned him; so that " after having been poisoned and unpoisoned many " Times, it was next to a Miracle how he remain'd alive."

THE Marchioness and *St. Croix* resolved to make use of a profligate Wretch, whose Character

* The French runs thus: *Qu'on leur donnoit un coup de pistolet dans un bouillon.*

and Dispositions they were acquainted with, in order to poison the Lieutenant-Civil and the Counsellor, her Brothers. *La Chauffée* was the Name of this Villain, who had been a Servant to *St. Croix*, in whose excellent School he became an Adept in Wickedness. The Marchioness introduced this Fellow into the Service of her Brother the Counsellor, who then lived with the Lieutenant-Civil, but did not let them know he had been in *St. Croix's* Service. This infamous Rascal, who had been promised a Reward of 100 Pistoles, mix'd Poison with some Wine and Water, and presented it to the Lieutenant-Civil whilst he was at Dinner. This Magistrate, as soon as he had drank some of it, cried out, *What hast thou given me? Have you a Mind to poison me, you Rascal?* He would not drink the rest, but desired his Secretary, who was at Table with him, to taste it, which he did, and found it was bitter, and had a vitriolic Smell. *La Chauffée* excused himself by saying, that by Mistake he had used a Glass wherein the Counsellor's Valet de Chambre had taken Physick some Days before; so that he got off with a Reprimand for his Negligence, and nothing more was then said of it.

As we do not easily suspect a Person can be guilty of so great a Crime, it is very seldom guarded against or prevented, and a Man delivers himself up (so to speak) as a Victim to those who have a Design upon his Life. The Lieutenant-Civil having resolved to spend the *Easter Holidays* at his Estate of *Villequoy* in *Beausse*, carried with him his Brother the Counsellor, who was attended by his

Servant

Servant *La Chauffée*. A Pigeon-pye being brought to Table at Dinner, seven Persons who eat of it (of which Number were the two Brothers) were very sick with it, and all of them had violent Retchings; on the contrary, those who did not taste it were very well. They all return'd to *Paris*, but the Lieutenant-Civil and his Brother look'd like Men just recovered from a long and dangerous Illness. The 20th of *April*, *St. Croix*, who was willing to make sure of a Reward for his Crimes, required from the Marchioness a Promise of 30,000 Livres under her own Hand.

THE Lieutenant-Civil grew worse and worse, and after having been for a long Time in a languishing Condition, with a great Aversion to all Manner of Victuals, and continual Vomitings, Nature being at last spent he died without any Fever the 17th of *June*, 1670. He was very much emaciated some Days before his Death, and felt a great Burning in his Stomach. Being opened, his Stomach and the *Duodenum* were found black and quite rotten, and his Liver was mortify'd and burnt. It was then pretty plain he had been poisoned, but the Author not being known, all Conjectures that were made upon this Account produced nothing.

St. Croix acquainted the Marchioness, who was then at one of her Country Seats, with the Death of her eldest Brother, and told her, the Disorder the younger laboured under was a sure Indication he would go the same Way, in a little Time.

THE Counsellor languished three whole Months, and had the very same Symptoms as the Lieutenant-Civil,

Civil, and died after the same Manner: He was opened, and his Stomach and Liver were also burnt and mortify'd. He had so little Suspicion of *La Chaussee's* having poisoned him, that he left him a Legacy of 100 Crowns.

PEOPLE in those Times made this sarcastical Remark, that no Physician ever offer'd up so many Victims to Death as the Marchioness had done; and said, she had usurped a Power which, as *Moliere* says, those of the Faculty alone have a Right to exercise with Impunity. However, she could not poison Lady *D'Aubray* her Sister, who undoubtedly was upon her Guard; but, notwithstanding the violent Suspicions she had conceived against the Marchioness, she was generous enough to assist her in her Misfortunes, and to send her Money into the foreign Countries whither she afterwards retired.

THE Account of the Death of so many People being spread abroad, with the several Circumstances that discovered the real Causes thereof, persuaded every Body that the Father and his two Sons had been poisoned; but the Authors of these Crimes were not yet known, and scarce guess'd at. *La Chaussee* himself was happy enough not to be suspected; for in learning from *St. Croix* how to commit a wicked Action, he had, at the same time, learnt how to conceal it, and how to put on an innocent Countenance. At last Providence being provoked at so many repeated Murders, was pleased to discover them in the following Manner.

It is very probable that *St. Croix* designed still many Persons more to fall a Sacrifice, either to his

Revenge or Avarice, for he always continued preparing his poisonous Compositions ; but one Day, as he was exercising his diabolical Art, the Glass-Mask he made use of, for fear of the dangerous Effluvia of his poisonous Drugs, fell from his Face, and he was instantly suffocated. Thus perished this profligate Villain by the Effects of his own Wickedness. As the Relations of the Deceased were not known, a Justice of the Peace (as is usual in such Cases) came to his Apartment, and put a Seal upon all his Goods ; and an Inventory being made, a Box was found and open'd, and the first Object that presented itself was a Sheet of Paper, wherein were wrote the following Words :

“ I EARNESTLY desire those into whose Hands
 “ this Box may fall, to do me the Favour of delivering it to the Marchioness of *Brinvillier*, living
 “ in *New-street, St. Paul's* ; because every Thing
 “ contained in it concerns her, and belongs to her
 “ alone, and it can be of no Use at all to any body
 “ else ; and in case this Lady should die before me,
 “ let it be burnt, with all that is in it, without
 “ opening or altering any Thing. And, in order
 “ that no Person may pretend Ignorance, I swear
 “ by the God I worship, and by all that is most
 “ sacred, that I advance nothing but the Truth ;
 “ and if they should do any Thing contrary to
 “ my Intentions, just and reasonable as they are,
 “ I lay it, both in this World, and in that which
 “ is to come, upon the Conscience of those People,
 “ for the Discharge of my own, protesting this is
 “ my last Will and Testament. Done at *Paris*,
 “ May

[II]

“ May the 25th in the Afternoon, 1672. Signed
“ *De St. Croix.*” And underneath were written
these Words, “ A Packet for Mr. *Penautier*, which
“ must be delivered to him.”

’Tis amasing that *St. Croix* should intend to interest the Consciences of those who might be curious enough to dive into his Mysteries of Iniquity, and that he should expect to conceal them under the Cloak of Religion. This, it must be own’d, was carrying his Wickedness to the highest Pitch.

HERE follows an Inventory of the Drugs found in his Box.

1. A PACKET sealed up with eight Seals of several Coats of Arms, on which was written, *Papers to be burnt in Case of Death, being of no Use at all to any Person whatsoever: I earnestly beseech those into whose Hands they may happen to fall to burn them, and charge their Conscience with doing it, without opening the Packet.*

THIS Packet contained two Parcels wherein Sublimate was found.

2. ANOTHER Packet seal’d up with six Seals of different Coats of Arms, on which was written the same Superscription, wherein was found half a Pound of Sublimate.

3. ANOTHER Packet seal’d up with six different Seals, on which the above Words were written, wherein three small Parcels of Sublimate were found: The first contain’d half an Ounce; the second two Ounces of the same, and a Quartern of *Roman Vitriol*; and in the third was found calcin’d and prepar’d Vitriol.

4. IN the said Box was found a large square Vial, containing about a Pint of clear Water, which being view'd by Mr. *Moreau*, a Physician, he said he could not tell what it was, without making Trial of it.

5. ANOTHER Vial fill'd with about half a Pint of clear Water, at the Bottom of which was a whitish Sediment. Mr. *Moreau* said the same of this as of the other.

6. A SMALL earthen Pot, containing two or three Drams of Opium prepared.

7. A PAPER folded up, wherein were two Drams of corrosive Sublimate.

8. A SMALL Box, with an infernal or blue Stone in it.

9. A PAPER with an Ounce of Opium in it.

10. A BIT of Regulus of Antimony, weighing three Ounces.

11. A PACKET of Powder, on which was wrote, *To stop the Effusion of Blood in Women*. Mr. *Moreau* said it was the Blossoms and Buds of Quinces dried.

12. THERE was likewise found a Packet with the same Superscription as above, containing seven and twenty Pieces of Paper, on each of which was wrote, *Several curious Secrets*.

13. ANOTHER Packet seal'd up with six Seals, and the above Superscription, wherein 79 Pounds of Sublimate, directed to different Persons, were found.

THE Author of the *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Trial of the Marchioness of Brinvillier*, after having given the above Account, makes this Remark:

These,

These, says he, were the Contents of this dreadful Box, more fatal to Paris, than Volcanos are to the Countries round about them. St. Croix must have vastly improved his Art of preparing Poisons, since the last Trials the Marchioness made by his Direction: The Reader will judge of his Progress by the several Experiments that were made with the different Kinds of Poisons contain'd in this hellish Box.

THE following is the Report of a skillful Physician concerning this Matter.

“ THIS poisonous Compound conceals itself from
 “ all the Enquiry we can make into it; 'tis so well
 “ disguis'd that it cannot be known; so subtil that
 “ it deceives the Art and Judgment of the Physicians. Of this Poison several Trials have been
 “ made in vain, the Rules have proved false, and
 “ the Aphorisms ridiculous. The surest and most
 “ common Experiments are made by the Help of
 “ Elements or Animals. In Water, for Instance,
 “ the Weight of Poison causes it to sink to the
 “ Bottom; the former is uppermost, the latter is
 “ precipitated.

“ THE Trial of Poison by Fire is no less certain; it evaporates, consumes, and dissipates
 “ what is innocent and impure in it, and leaves
 “ nothing but an acrid and bitter Matter, which
 “ alone is capable of resisting its Violence.

“ THE Effects which Poison generally produces
 “ upon Animals are still more evident. It spreads
 “ its Malignity where-ever it comes, mortifies,
 “ burns, and inflames the Bowels.

“ WELL,

“ WELL, *St. Croix's* Poison has gone through
 “ all these Trials ; it is above the Knowledge and
 “ Skill of Physicians, and baffles all their Experi-
 “ ments. This Poison swims on the Water, and
 “ precipitates that Element ; it is Proof against the
 “ Fire ; and in Animals it conceals itself with so
 “ much Subtilty that it cannot be discover'd : All
 “ the Parts of the Animal look sound and fresh,
 “ and, in short, it leaves after it all the Signs of
 “ Life, though it certainly causes Death.”

“ ALL Sorts of Trials and Experiments have
 “ been made of this Poison. The first by pouring
 “ some Drops of the Liquor of one of the Vials
 “ into Oil of Tartar and Sea-Water, in which Case
 “ nothing precipitated.

“ THE second Experiment was made by putting
 “ some of the said Liquor into a Vessel of Sand ;
 “ in which having continued for some time, no-
 “ thing sharp, bitter, or offensive to the Tongue,
 “ was found on the Sand.

“ THE third Trial was made upon a Turkey, a
 “ Pigeon, and a Dog ; which being dead and
 “ opened, there was only found a little congealed
 “ Blood in the Ventricles of the Heart.

“ ANOTHER Trial being made with a white
 “ Powder given to a Cat in a Sheep's Liver, the
 “ Cat had Retchings for half an Hour, and was
 “ found dead ; and being opened, the Poison had
 “ caused no visible Alteration at all in the Body.
 “ A second Proof of the same Powder was made
 “ upon a Pigeon, which dying, and being opened
 “ some

“ some time after, only a little reddish Water was
 “ found in its Stomach.”

THE Accounts of all the Physicians agree together.

SEVERAL Love-Letters from the Marchioness to *St. Croix* were likewise found in the said Box, of which here follows one of the most affectionate :

“ I HAVE thought proper to put an End to my
 “ Life, and for this Purpose I took this Evening
 “ some of what you gave me with so much Tender-
 “ nesses : It is a Receipt of *Glazer's* ; and by this
 “ you'll find I readily sacrifice my Life for your
 “ sake ; but before I die I shall expect you at the
 “ Rendezvous, in order to bid you an eternal
 “ Adieu.”

It is very likely she deceiv'd *St. Croix*, when she sent him Word she had poisoned herself : Such a desperate Resolution is not so easily executed as form'd, but is generally laid aside after proper Reflection.

THE Promise of 30000 Livres made by the Marchioness to *St. Croix* was likewise found in the Box. This Lady was under a great Concern, when she heard all his Goods were under the Seal of a Justice. She left no Stone unturn'd to get Possession of the fatal Box ; she even endeavoured to bribe the Justice, but to no Purpose. Her guilty Conscience increased her Fears ; so that having been inform'd that *St. Croix* had mentioned her in his Will, and declared she had a Right to the Box, she resolv'd, by the Advice of her Relations, to retire out of the Kingdom.

La Chauffée was so impudent as to dispute the Legality of the Seizure made by the Justice: He set forth, in the Action he brought for that Purpose, "That having been for seven Years in the Service of the Deceased, he had intrusted in his Hands two Hundred Pistoles, and an Hundred Crowns, which were in a Bag behind the Closet Window; and that in the said Bag was likewise an Obligation, which would justify that these Sums of Money belong'd to himself: That besides this, the said Box contain'd a Note for 300 Livres due to him from the Counsellor *D'Aubray*, his late Master; and three Receipts from the Master to whom he had serv'd his Apprenticeship, each for a Hundred Livres: All which Sums and Papers he demanded as his own."

THIS Step of *La Chauffée* occasion'd some Suspicion of his being guilty.

BUT whilst the Marchioness was consulting her Safety by withdrawing out of the Country, her Attorney appear'd, and made the following Declaration in her Behalf: "*Alexander La Mare*, Attorney of Lady *Mary-Margaret d'Aubray*, Marchioness of *Brinvillier*, declares, that if a Promissory Note for 30000 Livres, under the Hand of the said Marchioness, be found in a certain Box, it was obtain'd from her by Surprise, and

* The French Ladies don't lose their Maiden Names by marrying, but assume their Husband's Name as a Sirname to their own.

" she

“ she expects it should be declared void, and of
“ no Force.

La Chaussee hearing of the Discoveries lately made, was betray'd by the Stings of his own Conscience ; for the Guilty carry in their Breasts an implacable Tormentor, which leaves them no Rest, neither Day nor Night. In short, he was apprehended, and prosecuted by Lady *Mangot de Villarsceau*, Relict of the late Lieutenant-Civil, whom he had poisoned. It was order'd he should be put to the Torture ; and for fear he should be acquitted, in Case no Confession could be extorted from him, she made an Appeal to the Parliament. The Steps of inferior Judges are usually timorous and slow ; but convincing Proofs of his Guilt having been produced before the Parliament, he received the following Sentence in the Chamber of *Tournelle*, on the 4th of *March*, 1673. “ That the said *La Chaussee*, as arraign'd and convicted of having
“ poisoned the late Lieutenant-Civil, and the
“ Counsellor his Brother, be broke alive, and ex-
“ pire on the Wheel ; * but that he be previously
put

* This Sort of Execution is not well understood in *England* ; for though we say, *Broke on the Wheel*, it is not so in reality : And to give the Reader a right Notion of this cruel Punishment, 'tis necessary to inform him first, that none are executed in this Manner, but those guilty of the most heinous Crimes : The Criminal's Limbs are extended naked on a Cross (like that of *St. Andrew*) set on the Scaffold ; the Executioner covers his Privities and Face with a Handkerchief, or a Shirt, and then breaks his Bones with a large Iron Bar, beginning with the Right Arm, which he breaks twice, viz. at the Wrist, and near the Shoulder, and then does the same with the Left :

“ put to the Torture, in order to make him discover his Accomplices.”

THE Marchioness of *Brinvillier* not appearing was out-law'd, and condemned to be beheaded in Effigy.

La Chaussee being put to the Torture, confess'd *St. Croix* told him, that the Marchioness of *Brinvillier* had given him Poisons, in order to send her Brothers out of the World. He own'd he had given them Poison in Water and in Broth; that he put some reddish Water in the Glass he presented to the Lieutenant-Civil, and some clear Water in the Pigeon-pye that was serv'd up at *Villequoy*; that *St. Croix* had promised to give him an Hundred Pistoles, and to keep him constantly in his Service; that he gave to *St. Croix* an exact Account of the Effects of the Poison which he received from him, and administer'd by his Orders; that *St. Croix* had told him several Times the Marchioness of *Brinvillier* was ignorant of the Method of Poisoning, not remembering he had told him before, that she had given him the Poison for her Brothers. It seems by this, *St. Croix* was willing to be thought the only Master of the Marchioness's Secret. *La Chaussee* added, he thought she was not ignorant of what had been done, because she was continually

The Legs and Thighs are also broke, and he receives two Blows on the Belly; then he is put on a Wheel set upon a high Post, where he languishes in the greatest Torments that can be imagin'd till he expires, or for so many Hours, according to his Sentence. If he receives the *Coup-de-Grace*, or merciful Blow, 'tis given on his Stomach, and kills him immediately.

speaking

speaking to him of Poisons ; and after he had poisoned his Master and Brother, she advised him to run away, and gave him some Money for that Purpose ; that *St. Croix* had a great Mind to dispatch Lady *d' Aubray*, Sister to the Marchioness, and had endeavoured to get a Servant into the House, that would undertake the wicked Business ; but that he could not succeed.

THIS Confession gives room to think that *La Chaussée* gave Poison to the Lieutenant-Civil and the Counsellor more than once. Be that as it will, this Wretch was executed according to his Sentence.

WHAT may give a just Idea of this abandon'd Villain, is his Way of speaking of the Counsellor his Master, when any one enquired after his Health: *He is in a languishing Condition*, answer'd he, calling him at the same time some ill Name: *He gives us a great deal of Trouble, and I don't know when he'll go to the Devil.* And after his Death he said, *I have sew'd him up in a Sheet, and turn'd him on all Sides ; had he been living, I durst not have used him so.* And yet this Gentleman had left, as we have said before, a Legacy of 100 Crowns to this Monster of Wickedness and Ingratitude.

EVERY body was persuaded the Marchioness was guilty. The very Thoughts of her Crimes struck People with Horror, and they could scarce mention her Name without Trembling. She imagined herself in a safe Asylum at *Liege*, whither she had retired. Sovereign Princes indeed have a Right to protect Criminals, who take Refuge in their Dominions ;

but they all agree to except Murderers and Counterfeiters of the Coin from such Protection, as those Crimes are so extremely pernicious to Society.

Desgrais, an Exempt of the *Marshalsey*, was sent to *Liege*, in order to apprehend the Marchioness: He was accompanied by several Archers, and carried the King's Letter, directed to the Council of Sixty of that City, wherein that Monarch demanded the Marchioness to be given up, that she might be brought to Justice. *Desgrais* likewise carried with him a Copy of her Indictment, whereby it appeared she had been guilty of poisoning several Persons.

THE Council having enquired into the Case, and being satisfied the Charge against her was true, gave *Desgrais* an Order to seize upon the Marchioness: But as she had retired into a Convent, the Officer did not think it proper to apprehend her there, for fear of raising a Tumult in the City, and thereby running the Hazard of having his Prisoner rescued. He therefore disguised himself in the Dress of an Abbot, and paid her several Visits, as being one of her Countrymen, and whose Curiosity made him desirous of seeing her. In short, he soon began to talk in the Strain of a Lover, and pretended a violent Passion for her Ladyship; who being prompted by her own vicious Inclinations, readily lent an Ear to *Desgrais's* Proposals, and agreed to take a Walk with him out of the City. Here the pretended Lover on a sudden throws off the Disguise, arrests the Marchioness, and leaving her in the Custody of his Archers, return'd to the Convent, into which
the

Magistrates had given him Authority to enter. He searched the Lady's Apartment, and found under her Bed a little Box, which she earnestly desir'd to have restored to her, but to no Purpose. She was very uneasy about a Paper that was in it, which she called her *Confession*, and which took up fifteen or sixteen Pages: It was, in Fact, a short History of her Life. In the first Article she accused herself of having caused a House to be set on Fire; in another she own'd that at seven Years of Age she had suffer'd herself to be debauch'd: In a Word, she there confess'd, not only all the Crimes that were laid to her Charge, but also several others of which she was not suspected.

MADAM *de Sevigné*, whom I quoted above, in her 269th Letter writes thus: "Madam *de Brin-*
 " *villier* tells us in her Confession, that she lost her
 " Virginity at seven Years of Age, and ever after
 " liv'd in the same debauch'd Manner; that she
 " had poison'd her Father, her Brothers, and one
 " of her Children; nay she poisoned her own self,
 " in order to try the Effects of an Antidote of her
 " own preparing. (Here is even *Medea* herself out-
 " done!) She acknowledged this Confession was
 " her own Hand-writing, (which was imprudent to
 " the last Degree) but said she was out of her
 " Senses when she wrote it; that it was nothing
 " but a Piece of Phrenzy and Extravagance, not
 " worthy to be read or taken Notice of."

THE Marchioness put a Trust in one of the Archers, which he had the Prudence not to execute: She gave him a Letter, after she was arrested, to
 carry

carry to a Person of her Acquaintance, whose Name was *Theria* ; wherein she desir'd him to come immediately, and rescue her from *Desgrais* and his Men.

SHE intrusted the same Archer with another Letter to *Theria*, wherein she informs him, that *Desgrais's* Archers were but eight in Number, and might easily be beaten by five resolute Fellows.

IN a third Letter, given and directed as before, she sends *Theria* Word, that in Case he could not rescue her by open Force, he should kill two of the four Horses that drew the Coach she was carried in; and be sure to seize the Box above-mentioned, and burn it, otherwise she was undone.

THOUGH *Theria* had not received these Letters, yet he came to *Maestricht*, through which the Marchioness was to pass, and endeavour'd to bribe the Archers, by offering them a thousand Pistoles to let her escape ; but all prov'd ineffectual.

SHE then attempted to make away with herself by swallowing a Pin, but was prevented by one of the Archers. She was more affected with the Dread of her approaching Punishment, than with Remorse for the Crimes she had committed.

THE King ordered Mr. *Pallau*, a Counsellor in the Grand-Chamber of the Parliament, to go to *Rocroy*, in order to examine the Prisoner before she came to *Paris*. Madam *de Sevigné*, who mentions this Fact, says, it was so ordered because most of the Judges were related to the Criminal ; but I rather believe it was done that she might not have Time

to

to meditate her Answers. Be that as it will, the Order was executed.

IN her 265th Letter Madam *de Sevigné* says, “ *Brinvillier’s* Actions and Behaviour are the only Topics of Conversation. When she wrote in her Confession, that she had murdered her Father, no doubt it was for fear of forgetting it; being of so tender a Conscience, she was afraid that her small Faults might escape her Memory, and therefore thought proper to commit them to Writing.”

WHEN she was confined in the *Conciergerie* * at Paris, a Letter of her’s directed to Mr. *Penautier* was intercepted, wherein she spoke freely of the Danger she was in, gave him an Account of the Conduct she was determined to observe during the Course of the Proceedings against her, and told him she was resolved to confess nothing; but, on the contrary, to dissemble every thing. She ask’d his Advice, and desired he would interest his Friends in her Behalf.

THIS indeed she had already practised upon her Examination, at which Time she denied every Thing she was charged with, and even disowned the Letters she had wrote after she was arrested; nor would she acknowledge that she knew any thing of *St. Croix’s* Box when it was shewn to her.

SHE said, that the Reason of her giving a Note for 30000 Livres to *St. Croix* was, in order that he might appear amongst her Creditors, and prevail with them to come to reasonable Terms; but she

* A Prison so called.

had a Note of Indemnity from *St. Croix*, which she had lost upon the Road.

MADAM *Sévigné* relates, that whilst the Marchioness was in Prison, she desir'd to *play a Game at Piquet to pass away the Time*. One would think she must have been very unconcern'd under her melancholy Circumstances: But it is plain she was not always possess'd of such Tranquillity of Mind; for she made a second Attempt to kill herself, but was prevented. The Kind of Death she had pitched upon was a Sort of Impalement.

MR. *Nivelle*, an eminent Counsellor, undertook the Cause of the Marchioness, and argued the Point, “ Whether a Confession, written by an accused Person, in order to be shewn to a Confessor, ought to be admitted as Evidence in a Court of Justice ? ”

BEFORE he comes to discuss this Question, he endeavours to prepossess us in Favour of *Brinvillier*. He says, That *St. Croix* was the Demon that rais'd the Storm, and disturbed the Peace of her Family; that he made use of the Influence he had over the Marquis of *Brinvillier*, in order to ingratiate himself with his Lady. He blames her for placing such a Confidence in this wicked Man, but he excuses her at the same time, because he knew so well the Art of Dissimulation, that she was never thoroughly acquainted with his Heart.

HE says further, that *St. Croix* being enraged against the Family of Mr. *D'Aubray*, who had caused him to be imprison'd, was prompted by a Spirit of Revenge to poison her two Brothers, by the

the Assistance of *La Chaussée* : That the Marchioness did not so much as know of his villainous Design, and that his Aim was to make himself Master of the Estate of the Family, which according to his Scheme would fall into the Marchioness's Hands, whom he flatter'd himself he should be able to govern as he pleased.

He then briefly relates the unhappy Fate of *La Chaussée*, who was the Tool made use of by *St. Croix* to accomplish his Designs. He adds, that though the Marchioness was likewise accused, she did not abscond upon that Account, but only to avoid the Prosecution of her Creditors. He then proceeds to justify the Marchioness, and observes, that the horrid and heinous Crimes of which she was indicted require the strongest and plainest Proofs; that the Accusation is brought against a Lady of distinguished Birth, whose Education leaves no room even to suspect her being guilty. The greater the Crimes, as *St. Cyprian* excellently observes, the more evident ought the Proofs be, and the more unexceptionable the Witnesses.* We cannot easily induce ourselves to commit a heinous Crime; for 'tis hard to silence the Reproofs of Conscience. The Mind is shock'd, says *St. Ambrose*†, the Soul is in Pain when it commits a great Sin. The Holy Scripture very justly compares the Struggle we make in the perpetrating an atrocious

* *Quanto majora sunt crimina, tanto magis idoneis & indubitatis testibus indigere.*

† *Horret animus, tabescit mens, cum ad sceleris exitum pervenitur.*

Crime to the Pains of Childbed: *They conceive Mischief, and bring forth Vanity, and their Belly prepareth Deceit. — Behold, he travaileth with Iniquity, and hath conceived Mischief, and brought forth Falshood. — They conceive Mischief, and bring forth Iniquity.** From whence we may conclude, that a Person of high Birth, who has been educated in the Principles of Virtue, cannot, without great Difficulty, be drawn into a wicked Action, and will probably get the Victory over the strongest Temptation.

HE afterwards attacks the testimonial Proofs; and finds but three Witnesses, that deserve any Notice. Cluet, a Serjeant, one of these Witnesses, had deposed, that the Marchioness had said, *Her eldest Brother was good for nothing; that if she had been so disposed, she might have caused him to be assassinated by two Gentlemen on the Road to Orleans, when he was Intendant there; that she would have given fifty Louisd'ors† to recover the Box after St. Croix's Death; that she had us'd her best Endeavours to get it in his Life-time; and that had she recover'd it, she would have caused his Throat to be cut from Ear to Ear.*

UPON this Mr. Nivelles observes, there is no Likelihood the Marchioness would speak thus to a mean obscure Fellow; that her great Desire of regaining the Box, must be attributed to her want of the Papers contained in it. He then makes use of every

* Job xv. 35. Ps. vii. 14. If. lix. 4.

† Fifty Guineas.

Argument to invalidate the Depositions of the two other Witnesses, as being founded only on Hearsay, and little better than mere Conjectures.

WITH regard to the amorous Correspondence supposed to be carried on between *St. Croix* and the Marchioness; were it true, says he, nothing to the Purpose could be inferred from it; because, allowing her guilty of an unlawful Passion, yet we cannot imagine her to have been capable of committing the horrid Crimes laid to her Charge: Besides, the contrary has been sufficiently made appear already.

MR. *Nivelle* pretends to draw great Advantages from the dying Confession of *La Chaussée*, wherein he declares *St. Croix* had told him, that the Marchioness was ignorant of the Art of poisoning. We have already seen in what Sense this Declaration ought to be understood. And in order to give more Weight to *La Chaussée's* Confession, we must take Notice, says Mr. *Nivelle*, that the Truth which a Criminal keeps as a Prisoner in his Breast, at last breaks its Chains, when he is going to appear before the awful Tribunal of God. And to this I shall add, that all the Ties of Fear, Hope, Respect, and Love of Life, which keep the Truth (so dreadful to a Criminal) as it were in Chains, are then dissolv'd and broken; because all those human Influences vanish as Shadows before the strong Light of divine Justice, into the Hands of which the Transgressor is ready to fall.

As to the Box with a Paper in it, wherein *St. Croix* pretends it belong'd to the Marchioness; Mr.

Nivelle endeavours to shew by the Date of this Paper, and those of the Supercriptions on the Poisons, that they had been put into the Box after the Paper was written.

As this Box contain'd some affectionate Letters of the Marchioness, which might give room to censure her Conduct; *St. Croix*, to prevent all such ill-natur'd Reflections, desir'd that the Letters she wrote him, expressing her Passion for him, might be burnt. Here Mr. *Nivelle* allows the Marchioness had a criminal Affection for *St. Croix*; but he grants this Point merely to persuade us this was the only Crime she was guilty of. Nay, he draws yet another Inference in her Favour from these amorous Letters, *viz.* That she must be supposed innocent of the Poisonings laid to her Charge, because she makes no mention of them in these Letters; which 'tis probable she would have done, as her Heart was then open, and she was expressing all her Sentiments freely, without Fear or Reserve. But in spite of all the Eloquence Mr. *Nivelle* employs to veil and conceal the Crimes of Madam *Brinvillier*, we cannot but observe, that the more he endeavours to cover them, the plainer they appear.

THEN he returns to the Marchioness's Confession, which reveals all the horrid Transactions of her Life.

IN this Confession, which begins with these Words: *I confess myself to Almighty God, and to you my Father, &c.* she accuses herself of having poisoned her Father, and her two Brothers, and of having

having attempted to kill her Sister after the same Manner.

MR. *Nivelle* pretends, that this Accusation can be of no Use in a Court of Justice, because the inviolable Law of Secrecy, equally imposed upon the Confessor and those who make a Confession, either *vivâ voce*, or in Writing, renders it useless to all the Purposes of Civil Society.

THIS sacred Law was given by *Jesus Christ*, at the same Time he commanded us to reveal our Sins to a Confessor. Were it not for this Law of Secrecy, who would confess? It is so connected with the divine Precept, that it is an essential Condition of it. It is evident that *Jesus Christ* in calling Sinners to the Tribunal of Confession and Penance, that they may obtain Mercy, never intended to expose them to the Danger of losing their Honour, and even their Lives, by the Confession of their Sins. How would it be possible to reconcile such great Evils with the Goodness of God, which is so conspicuous at that Tribunal? From whence it follows, that this Law of Secrecy relates to Confessions in Writing, as well as those made by Word of Mouth; and that it obliges both the Confessor, and all those who may possibly have any Knowledge of the Confession; since the Reasons of Secrecy drawn from the Sacrament * itself, and from the Obligation of Confessing, are equally applicable to the one and the other.

* The *Roman-Catholicks* make a Sacrament of Penance or Penitence.

NOTHING makes it more evident, that this Law of Secrecy was enjoined by *Jesus Christ* himself, than our finding no Ecclesiastical Law concerning it in the first Ages of Christianity : For every one knew it was sufficient that it came immediately from *Christ* himself, and was a necessary Condition of the Obligation of Confession.

MR. *Nivelle*, by comparing the sacramental Confession of a Criminal, with the Confession he makes before a Judge or Magistrate, says, that the first is instituted by God for the Absolution of Sins, the second is established by Justice for the Punishment of them ; the former is a comfortable Refuge of Sinners, the latter a strong Proof of a Criminal's Guilt ; the one is the Means of their Salvation, the other the Instrument of their Destruction. He then quotes this beautiful Passage of St. *Ambrose*: *He who confesses, accuses himself before God ; he acknowledges his Sins, God pardons them : He accuses himself, God excuses him.* *

St. *Basil* is one of the first Fathers that acquaints us with the Custom of the Church, with regard to the inviolable Secrecy of Confession.† And all the Fathers and Councils that have since that Time renew'd this Precept, speak of it as a Doctrine which was observed in the first Ages ; they look upon it as a Rule observ'd by the Apostles themselves, and afterwards by the rest of the Church, as a Law dic-

* *Qui confitetur peccata sua coram Deo, agnoscit peccator, ignoscit Deus ; cum accusat, excusatur.*

† *Epist. ad Amphilo. Canon. 34.*

tated by the Holy Ghost himself.* From whence it follows that the Church did not prescribe the Inviolability of this Secrecy, but receiv'd it from a Power superior to itself; which Power can be none but that of God alone.

THE Author of the late Treatise of the *inviolable Secrecy of Confession*† demonstrates, by the Authorities he brings, the constant Practice of the Church in the Observation of that sacred Law.

THE General Council of *Lateran*, held under *Innocent III*, at the End of that well-known Canon, *Omnis utriusque sexus*, adds these Words, which are found in the Writings of most Divines: *A Priest must be very cautious not to divulge, either by Words or Signs, or in any Manner whatsoever, the Sin of his Penitent: If he has Occasion to consult any body, he may do it without discovering the Name of the Person; for we ordain that whosoever dares reveal the Sins intrusted to him in Confession, shall be depos'd from the Priesthood, and moreover closely confined in a Monastery, in order to do Penance there the Remainder of his Life.* This Council therefore does not establish the Rule, but supposes it already established, and lays Penalties upon the Confessors that discover the Secrets of their Penitents, either through Malice or Indiscretion. As the Precept of Secrecy imposed upon the Confessors is a divine Precept, derived from *Jesus Christ* himself; it follows, that in any Case whatsoever no ecclesiastical or secular Power

* *Apostolica Regula Spiritus Sancti oraculo dictata.* S. Leo. Hincmar.

† Mr. l'Abbé Lenglet du Fresnoy.

has a Right to dispense with it; nor can any Interest, either publick or private, authorise the Violation of it.

FROM hence it likewise follows, that the Deposition of a Confessor, who should be guilty of discovering the Confession of a Criminal, ought not to be received by the Judges; because this Confession, which ought to be revealed to God alone, can be of no Use to Men; and they infringe upon God's Rights, when they make use of such Confession.

BUT the Confessor is not the only one obliged to Secrecy, because he is not the only one who may come at the Knowledge of the Crimes declared in a Confession. The same Law likewise obliges those to whom a Confessor reveals, either indiscreetly or out of Malice, the Confession of his Penitents. The Interpreters which a Penitent may be under a Necessity of making use of, either for want of understanding the Confessor, or of being understood by him, are no less oblig'd to Secrecy. The same is to be said of those who may have been intrusted with another's Confession, or may happen to hear the private Confession of a Penitent; or may see a dumb Person confessing by Signs. Lastly, those who by Chance have found any Person's Confession in Writing are obliged to the same Secrecy; and farther, they ought to leave off reading it, as soon as they know what it is.

A WRITTEN Confession is an *Interpreter*, as the Divines call it, *Internuntia Confessionis*, which the Secrets of the Penitent are intrusted to, before they are revealed to the Confessor: Consequently such a
Confession

Confession ought to be kept with inviolable Secrecy. Agreeable to this Doctrine, when Confessions were made by Letters to absent Confessors, the Persons into whose Hands they happened to fall by Mistake, were obliged to observe the same Law of Secrecy.

'Tis principally and essentially to God that Confession is directed, and we may receive Absolution from him without the Mediation of his Ministers, by confessing our Sins to him only, either by Word of Mouth, or in Writing: For which Reason the Royal Psalmist says, *I will confess my Transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the Iniquity of my Sin.** I formed in my Heart the Resolution of confessing my Sins to God, and thou, O Lord, didst immediately pardon me. But still the Obligation of confessing to the Priest is perpetual in our Religion.

St. *Augustin* being thoroughly convinc'd that God is even beforehand with us by his Mercies, makes use of those beautiful Expressions in the fifth Canon of the Distinction *de Pænis*: *O wonderful Mercy of God! The Sinner resolves to confess his Sins, and they are forgiven him: Even before he has uttered a Word, God has heard him. The Resolution of doing a good Action is rewarded as the Action itself.*† From hence it follows, that Man, whatever Authority he is invested with, cannot make use of a Confession,

* Psalm xxxii. 5.

† *Magna pietas Dei, ut ad solam promissionem peccata dimiserit; nondum pronuntiat ore, & tamen Deus jam audit corde, qui ipsum dicere quoddam pronuntiare est; votum enim pro opere reputatur.*

which is a Secret reserved for the Knowledge of God alone.

THIS Obligation of Secrecy, which concerns all those who come to the Knowledge of a Confession, is a necessary Consequence of the Precept which enjoins Confession; for as God invites the Sinner to the Tribunal of Penance, he gives him to understand that Secrecy will be observ'd; otherwise the Penitent would be deceived by God himself, if he had not forbid the divulging the Secrets of Confession. Those that are guilty of divulging them make Confession odious, and frustrate God's Design, by keeping a Sinner from the Tribunal of Repentance, which the Obligation of Secrecy gives him Boldness to approach. They intimidate Men's Consciences, and drive them out of this Port of Salvation: More especially they deter the greatest Sinners, who are those that want it most. They drive from it such Persons as are obliged, for want of a good Memory, to set down their Confession in Writing: A Practice in itself so innocent and lawful, that their own Piety, or even their Confessor might prescribe it; and without which it cannot be expected they will make a full Confession of their Sins. It would render Confession of no Use to deaf and dumb People, who cannot confess otherwise; and consequently are by this Means deprived of the Assurance of Absolution.

FROM this great Principle it follows, that in what Manner soever a Confession may be made, it ought to be kept under the Seal of an inviolable Silence. If those who have heard a Confession are not allow'd

to

to make use of it in their Depositions on a Trial, it would be still more dangerous to receive written Confessions as Evidence, because Proofs in Writing are stronger than mere oral Testimonies. The Principle on which the Obligation of Secrecy in Matters of Confession is grounded, is so evident itself, that it needs not the Authority of Casuists to support it.

BUT notwithstanding this, Mr. *Nivelle* brings the Authorities of *Henriquez*, in his *Treatise on Penance*; of *Diana*, in his *Questions concerning the Sacraments*, Resolution 1st and 12th; and of *Navarro* in his 16th Chapter; who all agree, that we ought to leave off reading a Confession as soon as we know what it is. That celebrated Casuist *Dominic Soto*, who was Confessor to the Emperor *Charles V*, and assisted at the first Sessions of the Council of *Trent*, relates, in the fourth of his *Sentences*, that an Ecclesiastical Judge, having found a private Person's Confession in Writing, made use of it to lay an Information against the Penitent, but was punished for it by his Superior. This Divine adds, that this Law is equally binding, both on Civil and Ecclesiastical Judges. And farther, Mr. *Nivelle* quotes this fine Passage of Cardinal *Du Perron*, in his Reply to the King of *Great-Britain*, Chap. 5. " That
" the Church has given to her Children, who con-
" fess themselves to her, a strong Promise of Se-
" crecy, as a Pledge for their Honour and Life;
" which Obligation cannot be violated, without
" breaking through all Laws, Divine and Human.

NEITHER can it be said, that Madam *Brin villier's*

Memoirs were but a Sketch of a Confession; and not a real one: For it begins with these Words, *I confess myself to God, and to you my Father, &c.* It is evidently a real Confession. Besides, admitting it to be only a Sketch of a Confession, it ought to be kept with the same Secrecy; since every Means the Penitent makes use of towards his Confession is sacred, as it were, and should be covered with the Veil of Silence.

ST. Thomas puts the Case of a Penitent, who should imagine he was confessing to a Priest, when in reality the Person was not so: And he asserts, that the Trust the Penitent reposes in the Person who receives his Confession, and his Intention of confessing himself to God, lays an Obligation of Secrecy upon every one that hears him. *Joinville*, who certainly was not a Priest, relates, that being at Sea a dreadful Storm arose, and many Persons, who were on board with him, confessed themselves to him: And in this Case, he was undoubtedly obliged to Secrecy.*

Santeuil was under the same Obligation, with regard to the Woman who confessed herself to him, thinking he was a Priest; nay, he was culpable for having heard her Confession, if what is related † of this Affair is true. 'Tis neither the Character of

* *Joinville* says freely, that he absolved them as far as lay in his Power: *In tantum quantum possum.*

† The Woman having acquainted *Santeuil* with all her Sins, ask'd his Absolution: *I cannot absolve you*, says he, *I am not a Priest.* Why then, says she, did you hear me? *I shall complain to the Bishop.* And I to your Husband, answer'd *Santeuil*.

the Priest, nor the Absolution, which obliges to Secrecy ; but the Nature of Confession itself.

WHAT Reasons could the Judges assign, who should make use of the Sacramental Confession of a Criminal, in order to convict him? Would they alledge their Character as Judges, as Trustees of Justice, which is a Resemblance of that of the Deity? Would they plead the publick Good, to which, they will say, every thing ought to give place? Would they dare to put these Reasons in the Scale against a Precept derived from *Christ* himself, against the Sacrament of Penance, and the Salvation of the Souls of Sinners? There is in the Name of *Christian*, which they assume, a Light that dissipates all these empty Shadows; since that Name obliges them to prefer God's Commandments to their Lives, their Honours, their Estates, to the Ties of Blood and Friendship, and in general to every Kind of Interest, both public and private.

Rodericus Acugna, a *Portuguese* Archbishop, in his *Treatise of Confessors* relates, that a certain Person having been condemn'd to die for Murder, refused to confess his Sins to the Priest, with an Obstinacy that no Persuasions could conquer. At first it was imagined that the terrible Apprehensions of Death had deprived the Criminal of his Senses: But *St. Thomas de Villeneuve*, Archbishop of *Valencia*, where the Fellow had committed the Murder, and where he was condemn'd, having earnestly press'd him to make his Confession, and enquired the Reasons of his obstinate Refusal, he at last answered, *I look with Horror upon Confession, because*
my

my Confessor discover'd the Crime for which I am now going to suffer; the Man I murder'd being his own Brother. St. Thomas de Villeneuve thought that the Interest of Religion was of greater Importance than the Execution of a Murderer: He therefore call'd the Confessor to him, and having made him acknowledge the Sin of divulging a Confession, which was the sole Cause of this Criminal's Condemnation, he obliged the Judges to revoke their Sentence, and to acquit the Prisoner; and order'd the Priest only a small Punishment, because he had ingenuously confess'd his Fault.

As to the publick Confessions, which were made in the primitive Ages of the Church, nothing can be justly inferr'd from that Practice against the Obligation of Secrecy in Confession. The Penitent voluntarily put himself to this open Shame; and when he accused himself of Crimes wherein he had Accomplices, he concealed their Names; neither did he particularize his Sins, but only made a general Confession of them, and took great Care to conceal whatever he thought improper to divulge. Besides, it was not allow'd to make any manner of Use of these Confessions.

ALL these convincing Arguments were sufficient, in the Counsellor's Opinion, to exempt Lady Brinvillier's Confession from the Cognizance of the Judges.

BUT it seems as if Mr. Nivelle distrusted the Strength of his Proofs, by saying, that the Confession of the Marchioness was the Effect of a disorder'd Mind, and that she was at that Time in a
Kind

Kind of Delirium. He is not aware, that by endeavouring to persuade us that this Lady in her Frenzy might accuse herself of Crimes she was not guilty of, he gives room to conclude that her Confession, being the Fruit of a distemper'd Brain, has not the Character of a true Confession, such as is subject to the Law of Secrecy; and thereby he weakens his own Arguments.

BUT what Advocate can prevent his Pleadings being censured? It must be confess'd however, that these of Mr. *Nivelle* deserve to be reckon'd among those that have done Honour to the Bar.

THERE is Reason to think, that the Court,* without having any Regard to the Confession of the Marchioness, thought there were sufficient Proofs to condemn her. The Crimes that had been committed were fully proved by *La Chauffée's* Trial; and from thence it was easy to discern that *St. Croix* and the Marchioness were the Authors of them. Interest, the chief Source of Wickedness, was the Motive that influenced both these Wretches: The Marchioness was prompted to her Crimes by a Desire of getting Possession of the Estate and Effects of her Father, Brothers, and Sister; and *St. Croix* was in hopes of being entirely Master of that Lady's Fortune, who was devoted to him by so blind a Passion. The fatal Box before mention'd, which contain'd so many Poisons, and which belonged to the Marchioness according to *St. Croix's* Declaration, was one of the most evident Proofs against

* The Parliament.

her. Add to this the criminal Passion she had for *St. Croix*; the dying Confession of *La Chaussee*, (whatever Mr. *Nivelle* may say of it) and all the Conjectures that were drawn from the Depositions of the Witnesses, and the Flight of the Marchioness, who had suffer'd herself to be condemn'd without appearing to defend herself; together with the Half-Confessions she let slip in her Answers at her Examination. All which were such convincing Proofs of her Guilt, that the Court pass'd upon her the following Sentence.

“ THE Court, (the Grand Chamber and *Tournelle* being assembled) having consider'd the Criminal Process begun by the Provost or his Lieutenant in the *Chatelet*, at the Request of the Substitute of the King's Attorney-General, continued at the Request of Lady *Mary-Theresa Mangot de Villarceau*, Relict of Lord *Anthony d'Aubray*, Knight and Count of *Offremont*, Lord of *Villers* and other Places, the King's Counsellor in his Councils, Master of the Requests in Ordinary of his Household, and Lieutenant-Civil of the Provostship and Viscounty of *Paris*, Accuser and Plaintiff, the said Substitute being joined; against Lady *Mary Margaret d'Aubray*, Wife of the Marquis of *Brinvillier*, *John Baupin*, Valet de Chambre, and one *La Pierre*, absent and Accomplices; and also against *John Amelin*, otherwise *La Chaussee*, a Journeyman Barber, late a Servant to Mr. *d'Aubray*, a Counsellor in the said Court, then a Prisoner; and against
“ Lady

“ Lady *Magdalen Bertrand de Breuil*, Widow of
 “ Mr. *St. Croix*, late a Captain of Horse in the Regi-
 “ ment of *Traffi*, Accused and Defendants. The
 “ said Proofs being judged in the Chamber of
 “ *Tournelle*, against the said *La Chaussée*, and Lady
 “ *d’Aubray* of *Brinvillier*, who was out-law’d by
 “ the same; and ever since continued in the said
 “ Chamber at the Request of the King’s Attorney-
 “ General, and of the said Lady *Mangot*, a Wi-
 “ dow, against the said Lady *d’Aubray* of *Brin-*
 “ *villier*, a Prisoner in the *Conciergerie* of the Pa-
 “ lace, Defendant; and being terminated according
 “ to the Judgments given in the Grand Chamber
 “ and *Tournelle* assembled, in Consequence of the
 “ Traverse made by the said *d’Aubray* of *Brin-*
 “ *villier*, and in Conformity to the Opinion of the
 “ King’s Attorney-General. The said *d’Aubray*
 “ being heard and interrogated upon the Cases
 “ arising in the Course of her Trial, the Court
 “ has pronounced and declared, and does declare,
 “ the said *d’Aubray* of *Brinvillier* justly arraign’d
 “ and convicted of having caused to be poisoned
 “ Mr. *Dreux d’Aubray*, her Father, and the said
 “ Masters *d’Aubray*, the one a Counsellor in the
 “ Parliament, and the other Lieutenant-Civil, her
 “ two Brothers, and of having attempted to take
 “ away the Life of the late *Theresa d’Aubray*, her
 “ Sister; and for Satisfaction of the same has
 “ condemn’d and condemns the said *d’Aubray* of
 “ *Brinvillier*, to make the *Amende honorable* before
 “ the chief Door of the Metropolitan Church of
 G “ *Paris*,

“ *Paris*, whither she shall be carried in a
 “ Dung-Cart, bare-footed, with a Halter about
 “ her Neck, holding in her Hands a burning
 “ Torch, weighing two Pounds; and being there
 “ on her Knees shall say and declare, that wicked-
 “ ly and maliciously, and to get Possession of their
 “ Estates, she caused her Father and her two
 “ Brothers to be poisoned, and attempted the Life
 “ of her late Sister, of which she repents, and asks
 “ Pardon for it of God, of the King, and of Jus-
 “ tice: And this done, she shall be carried and con-
 “ ducted in the said Dung-Cart to the *Place de*
 “ *Greve* of this City, in order to be beheaded on
 “ a Scaffold, which shall be there erected for that
 “ Purpose; her Body shall be burnt, and her
 “ Ashes thrown into the Air; but before her Exe-
 “ cution, she shall be put to the Torture, both or-
 “ dinary and extraordinary, to make her confess
 “ her Accomplices: And moreover, she is de-
 “ clared disinherited of all the Estates and Effects
 “ of her said Father, Brothers, and Sister, from
 “ the Day she committed the Crimes of which
 “ she is convicted: And all her Estates are de-
 “ clared confiscated to whom they legally belong,
 “ except those which are not subject to Confisca-
 “ tion, after previously deducting four Thousand
 “ Livres for the Use of the King, five Hundred
 “ for Prayers to God for the departed Souls of
 “ her said Father, Brothers, and Sister, in the
 “ Chapel of the *Conciergerie* of the Palace, and
 “ ten Thousand by Way of Satisfaction for Da-
 “ mages

“ mages done to the said *Mangot*, and all Expences, even those incurr'd by the Prosecution of the said *Amelin*, otherwise *La Chaussée*. Done in Parliament July 16, 1676.”

THE Marchioness, who had always denied her Crimes, acknowledged them after her Sentence. Mr. *Pirot*, Doctor of the *Sorbonne*, who confessed and attended her when she was carried to Execution, has given a very moving Account* of the last Hours of this remarkable Criminal. He describes her as so sensibly affected with her Guilt, so illuminated with the Divine Grace, and such a true Penitent, that he even ventures to say, he should be glad to be in her Place. He says, she desir'd to have the Eucharist administer'd to her, but that it was denied her, as what was never given to Persons convicted of capital Offences. He told her, she ought to look upon herself as a publick Penitent, who is not admitted to the Participation of that holy Sacrament. She requested the consecrated Bread† might be given to her, as it was to the Marshal *de Marillac*, her Kinsman, before he was executed : But this he likewise refused her, saying, that Marshal *Marillac*'s Crime was not near of so black a Nature as her own ; that she ought to expiate it, not only by being deprived

* This has never been printed.

† Bread that is distributed to the Congregation during a high Mass.

of the Eucharist, but even of the Figure of that Sacrament.

THE famous Painter *Le Brun* placed himself in a Situation where he might observe her Face attentively, when she was carried to Execution, in order to copy the Aspect of a Criminal under all the Terrors of her approaching Punishment. She met in her Way to the *Greve* several Ladies of Quality, who came there out of Curiosity to see her; and looking earnestly at them, she told them, in a sneering Manner, *You are come to see a fine Sight indeed!*

LET us hear what *Madam de Sevigné* says in her 296th Letter to *Madam de Grignan* her Daughter.

Paris, Friday, July 17, 1676.

“It is all over; *Brinvillier* is reduced to Ashes;
 “her poor little Body, after her Execution, was
 “thrown into a very great Fire, and her Ashes
 “into the Air; so that we shall draw them in with
 “our Breath, and by the Communication of the
 “small Particles we shall be seized with an Inclination of Poisoning, which will do a great deal
 “of Mischief. She was tried Yesterday; this
 “Morning her Sentence was read to her, and the
 “Torture was shewn her; but she said there was
 “no need of it, for she would confess every Thing:
 “And indeed, for four Hours together, she gave
 “an Account of her Life, which was shocking beyond Imagination. Ten Times successively did
 “she poison her Father, and yet had much ado
 “to

“ to kill him. Love and Intrigues had always a Share in her Crimes. She desired to speak to the Attorney-General, and was an Hour with him; but the Subject of their Conversation is not yet publickly known.

“ At Six in the Evening she was carried in a Cart, without any Cloaths but her Smock, with a Halter about her Neck, to the Church of *Notre Dame*, where she made the *Amende honorable*. Then she was put again into the Cart, where I saw her lying on some Straw that was in it, with the Doctor on one Side, and the Executioner on the other. I confess the Sight made me tremble. Those who saw the Execution relate, that she shew'd a Courage above her Sex: For my Part I was upon the Bridge of *Notre Dame*, and I never saw so many People together, and *Paris* so silent and attentive. If you ask me what I saw, I answer you, I saw a Head-dress, that is all. This Day was set apart for the Acting of a Tragedy. To-morrow I shall be better informed, and will let you know every Particular.”

In the following Letter, she says something more about *Brinvillier*: “ She died as she liv'd; that is, in a bold and resolute Manner. She went to the Room where they intended to put her to the Torture, and seeing three Pails full of Water: “ Indeed, said she, *there is enough to drown me; for if they consider my Size, they cannot expect I*
“ *shall*

“ *shall be able to drink all that.* * She heard the
 “ Judge pronounce her Sentence without Fear or
 “ Weakness; and towards the Conclusion she made
 “ him begin again, saying, *The Dung-Cart shock’d*
 “ *me at first, and hinder’d me from taking Notice of*
 “ *what followed.* She desired the Executioner
 “ might be placed before her, that she might not
 “ see that Villain *Desgrais*, as she called him, who
 “ apprehended her; for that Officer rode before
 “ the Cart. Her Confessor having reprimanded
 “ her for this; *Well*, said she, *then let me have the*
 “ *Sight of him; I beg your Pardon for abusing him.*
 “ She got upon the Scaffold alone and bare-footed,
 “ and the Executioner spent a Quarter of an Hour
 “ in shaving and placing her Head; which the
 “ People complain’d of as a very great Cruelty.
 “ The next Day People sought for her Bones, as
 “ they had a Notion she was a Saint. She had
 “ two Confessors, one of whom told her she must
 “ conceal every thing, the other that she was obli-
 “ ged to divulge every thing: At which Difference
 “ of their Opinions she could not forbear laughing:
 “ *I may*, said she, *with a safe Conscience do whatever*
 “ *I please.* She said nothing at all of her Accom-

* It seems by this, that the *Torture* or *Question*, as ’tis called,
 is perform’d at *Paris* by making the Criminal drink Water un-
 till he confesses, or is almost suffocated. The *Torture* is of a
 different Kind in several Provinces of *France*: In *Britany* the
 Criminal has his Legs burnt; in *Orleanois* the Legs are press’d
 flat, and the Bones broke; in *Burgundy* a Teeth-Wheel tears
 the Back-bone of the Criminal, which is apply’d to it whilst it
 is turn’d round.

“ plices:

“ plices: *Penautier* will appear whiter than Snow;
 “ the Publick is not pleased at it, and says the
 “ Judges are bribed.”

In her 299th Letter she adds, “ The World is
 “ very unjust, and has been so in respect of *Brin-*
 “ *villier*: Such Crimes as hers were never treated
 “ in so tender a Manner: She was not put to the
 “ Torture; but expected her Pardon, and never
 “ thought of dying, till she got on the Scaffold:
 “ Then she cried out, *Now I find it is in earnest!*

MADAM *Sevigné* says farther, “ ’Tis not possible
 “ this wicked Woman should be in Heaven, her
 “ guilty Soul must needs be separated from those
 “ of the Righteous. To murder a Person at once
 “ is nothing, in Comparison of being employed
 “ eight Months in killing one’s Father, receiving
 “ Tokens of his Love and Tenderness almost every
 “ Day, and yet repaying all his Favours by in-
 “ creasing the Doses of his Poison.” But let us
 reflect a little, and we shall conclude, that Madam
Sevigné had not a just Idea of God’s Mercy, which
 is extensive beyond our Comprehension.

In the Course of this Trial no mention at all is
 made of the Marquis of *Brinvillier*, who was still
 alive: We must suppose, for his Honour, that the
 Shame and Confusion brought upon him by having
 such a Wife, induced him to conceal himself, and
 at last to bury himself, as it were, in Retirement.
 However, Madam *Sevigné* says, *That he solicited*
in Behalf of his dear Spouse, during her Confinement.

Glazer the Apothecary, at whose Shop *St. Croix* bought his Drugs, was involved in this Trial, and had a great deal of Difficulty to get off. Since that Time, by an Arret of the Parliament of the 27th of *February*, 1677, related in the third Volume of the *Journal of Audiences*, Book II. Chap. ix. the Apothecaries and Druggists are obliged to be very cautious in regard to the Sale of such Drugs as may be applied to wicked Purposes, and are not allow'd to sell them to all Sorts of People. They are obliged to register the Names of those who buy any, and to specify for what Use they are design'd. And by a subsequent Edict the King laid them under still greater Restrictions.

THE Intimacy of the Marchioness with *Penautier* was the Occasion of his being taken into Custody: And he found it no easy Matter to convince the Judges of his Innocence, and to regain his Liberty. The strongest Circumstance against him was his intimate Acquaintance and Correspondence with *St. Croix* for eighteen Years together.

WE have already seen what *Madam Sevigné* said of *Penautier*. And in her 291st Letter she farther informs us, " That he was nine Days in * *Ravail-lac's* Cell, where he was dying when he was removed: He has very great Friends, particularly the Archbishop of *Paris*, and Mr. *Colbert*."

SHE adds, in her 298th Letter, "*Penautier* is happy; never had Man so many powerful Friends:

* The Villain that assassinated *Henry IV.* of *France*.

" You'll

“ You’ll find he will be acquitted, but the
 “ World will not believe him innocent. There
 “ are some extraordinary Circumstances in this
 “ Trial, but they must not be mentioned.”

“ In her 299th Letter she writes, “ Marshal Ville-
 “ roy said some Days ago, that *Penautier* would
 “ be ruin’d by this Affair : Marshal *Grammont* an-
 “ swered, *He must retrench the Expences of his*
 “ *Table.* ’Tis reported that 100,000 Crowns
 “ have been employed to make Matters easy : In-
 “ nocence has no Occasion for such Profusion.”

“ Mr. *Turgaut de St. Clair*, Master of the Requests,
 wrote an excellent *Latin Poem* on the Marchioness
 of *Brinvillier’s* Art of Poisoning, and the shocking
 Discoveries she made.

“ POISONING is rather the Crime of Women than
 of Men; for, not having Courage enough to re-
 venge themselves openly by Arms, they chuse this
 Way of attacking their Enemies, which Favours
 the Timorousness of their Sex, and conceals their
 Malice.

“ *Livy* (in Book VIII. of his first Decade) relates
 a memorable Instance of the Wickedness of the *Ra-*
man Ladies, viz. Under the Consulship of *Claudius*
Marcellus and *Titus Valerius*, several *Roman* Citizens
 of the first Rank were poisoned: And it was ob-
 serv’d that most of them died after the same Man-
 ner. At last a certain Slave went to *Quintus Fa-*
bius an Edile, and promised to discover the Cause
 of this public Plague, as *Livy* calls it. *Fabius*
 communicated this Affair to the Consuls; and upon

the Slave's Information twenty *Patrician* Ladies were apprehended, whilst they were preparing their poisonous Compositions, amongst whom were *Cornelia* and *Sergia*, who strenuously asserted they were making up nothing but salutary Medicines : But the Slave insisting upon their being Poisons, a Trial of them was made by causing the Ladies to swallow the fatal Draughts they had prepared, and so they perished by their own Devices. These discover'd several of their Accomplices, who inform'd against many more, infomuch that a Hundred and Seventy *Patrician* Ladies were convicted and executed. Such Numbers of People died before this Discovery was made, that at first it was attributed to a pestilential Quality in the Air ; and on that Account a Dictator was appointed to go and perform the Ceremony of driving a Nail into the Temple of *Jupiter*, as was usual on any publick Calamity.

It is the Duty of Magistrates to use their utmost Endeavours to bring all Poisoners, and their Accomplices, to Justice, and to extirpate them from the Face of the Earth ; for the Life of every one is at their Mercy : Princes especially are more in Danger than other People, and 'tis a Kind of Death they find it difficult to guard against.

A *Venetian* Ambassador gives an Account, that under the Pontificate of *Urban III.* an *Italian* Gentleman confess'd his having poison'd five Popes.

We find in History, that wicked Princes have sometimes had recourse to the detestable Means of getting
rid

rid of their Enemies by Poison. Cardinal Birague, used to say to Charles IX. and Henry III. of France, that they never would conquer their Enemies without the Assistance of their Cooks.

GENERAL Thaurin, Viceroy of Naples, lately did a very laudable Action. A Woman, named *Trufania*, famous for the Art of Poisoning, had found out a Preparation of such a Nature, that after it had had its fatal Effects, no Appearance of it was left, either in the Brain or any Part of the Viscera. It was a Liquor as clear as Rock-Water, and had no more taste than Water itself; so that any one might drink it without the least Suspicion. This Poison attack'd the Breast, where it caused an incurable Defluxion; and the Persons so poisoned were supposed to die of that Defluxion only.* This base Woman sold her Poisons to Nephews who thought their Uncles would never die, whose Estates they were to inherit; to wanton Wives, who were tired of their Husbands; and in short, to all that wanted to get rid of a troublesome Friend, or of an Enemy. Several People through their Superstition felt the fatal Effects of this poisonous Liquor; for it was sold under the Name of St. Nicolas de Bary's Water,

* Some such Poison as this, whose Effects cannot be distinguish'd from those of an accidental Distemper, seems to have been known to the Ancients; for Tacitus (*Annal. Lib. IV.*) writes, *Venenum Druso datum, quo paulatim irrepente, fortuitus morbus adsimularetur.* To which Passage Muretus subjoins from Theophrastus, (*Lib. IX. de Aconito*) *Συνήθισται δὲ ὄρεσι καὶ ἀλάχορες τὰς ἀναισθησίας, οἷον δύναντον, τεῖνοντον, ἰξάνοντον, ἰναυρόν, τὰς δὲ καὶ δύο ἔτη.* And such a slow Poison we may suppose Madam Brinwillier gave to her Father.

which

which is a Place in *Pouille*, very famous for Pilgrimages made to the Chapel of that Saint, where there is a Spring of Water, which is believed to have the Virtue of curing all Sorts of Diseases.

Trufania had already done abundance of Mischief, and kill'd a great many People, when General *Thaun* was acquainted with it. He ordered her to be apprehended, but having receiv'd Notice of it, she took Sanctuary in a Church: However the Viceroy, without having any regard to the Sacredness of the Place, which the *Italians* look upon as inviolable, caused her to be taken from thence; and she suffered the Punishment her Crimes deserved. The fatal Secret of this Woman became publick soon after her Execution, through the Indiscretion of the Judges to whom she divulged it. Most People in *Naples* were soon acquainted that she made use of a very common Sort of Herb, and that there was no Difficulty in the Preparation of the Water; so that the Art of Poisoning was well known, and frequently practised in that City.



F. I. N. I. S.